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THE ENGLISH GARDEN:

A

POEM.

BOOK THE SECOND.

BY

W. MASON, M. A.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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M.DCC.LXXVII.

THE

ENGLISH GARDEN.

BOOK THE SECOND.

HAIL to the Art, that teaches Wealth and Pride
How to poſſeſs their wiſh, the world's applauſe,
Unmixt with blame! that bids Magnificence
Abate its meteor glare, and learn to ſhine
Benevolently mild; like her, the Queen
Of Night, who ſailing thro' autumnal ſkies,
Gives to the bearded product of the plain
Her ripening luſtre, lingering as ſhe rolls,
And glancing cool the ſalutary ray
Which fills the fields with plenty *. Hail that Art

* This ſimile, founded on the vulgar error concerning the Harveſt Moon, however falſe in philoſophy, may, it is hoped, be admitted in poetry.

Ye ſwains! for, hark! with lowings glad, your herds
Proclaim its influence, wandering o'er the lawns
Reſtor'd to them and Nature; now no more
Shall Fortune's Minion rob them of their right,
Or round his dull domain with lofty wall
Oppoſe their jocund preſence. Gothic Pomp
Frowns and retires, his proud beheſts are ſcorn'd;
Now Taſte inſpir'd by Truth exalts her voice,
And ſhe is heard. "Oh let not man miſdeem,
"Waſte is not Grandeur, Faſhion ill ſupplies
"My ſacred place, and Beauty ſcorns to dwell
"Where Uſe is exil'd." At the awful ſound
The terrace ſinks ſpontaneous; on the green,
Broider'd with criſped knots, the tonſile yews
Wither and fall; the fountain dares no more
To fling its waſted cryſtal thro' the ſky,
But pours ſalubrious o'er the parched lawn
Rills of fertility. Oh beſt of Arts
That works this happy change! true Alchymy,
Beyond the Roſicruſian boaſt, that turns

Deformity

Deformity to grace, expence to gain,
And pleas'd returns to Earth's maternal lap
The long-loſt ſtores of AMALTHEA's horn.

When ſuch the theme, the Poet ſmiles ſecure
Of candid audience, and with touch aſſur'd
Reſumes his reed ASCRÆAN; eager he
To ply its warbling ſtops of various note
In Nature's cauſe, that Albion's liſtening youths,
Inform'd erewhile to ſcorn the long-drawn lines
Of ſtraight formality, alike may ſcorn
Thoſe quick, acute, perplex'd, and tangled paths,
That, like the ſnake cruſh'd by the ſharpen'd ſpade,
Writhe in convulſive torture, and full oft,
Thro' many a dank and unſunn'd labyrinth,
Miſlead our ſtep; till giddy, ſpent, and foil'd,
We reach the point where firſt our race began.
Theſe Fancy priz'd erroneous, what time Taſte,
An infant yet, firſt join'd her to deſtroy
The meaſur'd platform; into falſe extremes

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What marvel if they ſtray'd, as yet unſkill'd
To mark the form of that peculiar curve,
Alike averſe to crooked and to ſtraight,
Where ſweet Simplicity reſides; which Grace
And Beauty call their own; whoſe lambent flow
Charms us at once with ſymmetry and eaſe.
'Tis Nature's curve, inſtinctively ſhe bids
Her tribes of Being trace it. Down the ſlope
Of yon wide field, ſee, with its gradual ſweep,
The ploughing ſteers conduct their fallow ridge;
The peaſant, driving thro' each ſhadowy lane
His team, that bends beneath th' incumbent weight
Of laughing CERES, marks it with his wheel;
At night, and morn, the milkmaid's careleſs ſtep
Has, thro' yon paſture green, from ſtile to ſtile,
Impreſt a kindred curve; the ſcudding hare
Draws to her dew-ſprent ſeat, o'er thymy heaths,
A path as gently waving; mark them well;
Compare, pronounce, that, varying but in ſize,
Their forms are kindred all; go then, convinc'd

That

That Art's unerring rule is only drawn
From Nature's ſacred ſource; a rule that guides
Her ev'ry toil; or, if ſhe ſhape the path,
Or ſcoop the lawn, or, gradual, lift the hill.
For not alone to that embelliſh'd walk,
Which leads to ev'ry beauty of the ſcene,
It yields a grace, but ſpreads its influence wide,
Preſcribes each form of thicket, copſe, or wood,
Confines the rivulet, and ſpreads the lake.

Yet ſhall this graceful line forget to pleaſe,
If border'd cloſe by ſidelong parallels,
Nor duly mixt with thoſe oppoſing curves
That give the charm of contraſt. Vainly Taſte
Draws thro' the grove her path in eaſieſt bend,
If, on the margin of its woody ſides,
The meaſur'd greenſward waves in kindred flow;
Oft let the turf recede, and oft approach,
With varied breadth, now ſink into the ſhade,
Now to the ſun its verdant boſom bare.

As vainly wilt thou lift the gradual hill
To meet thy right-hand view, if, to the left,
An equal hill aſcends; in this, and all
Be free, be various, as is Nature's ſelf.

For in her wildneſs is there oft an art,
Or ſeeming art, which, by poſition apt,
Arranges ſhapes unequal, ſo to ſave
That correſpondent poize, which unpreſerv'd
Would mock our gaze with airy vacancy.
Yet fair Variety, with all her powers,
Aſſiſts the Balance; 'gainſt the barren crag
She lifts the paſtur'd ſlope; to diſtant hills
Oppoſes neighb'ring ſhades; and, central oft,
Relieves the flatneſs of the lawn, or lake,
With ſtudded tuft, or iſland. So to poize
Her objects, mimic Art may oft attain;
She rules the foreground; ſhe can ſwell or ſink
Its ſurface; here her leafy ſcreen oppoſe,
And there withdraw; here part the varying greens,

And croud them there in one promiſcuous gloom,
As beſt befits the Genius of the ſcene.

Him then, that ſov'reign Genius, Monarch ſole,
Who, from creation's primal day, derives
His right divine to this his rural throne,
Approach with meet obeiſance; at his feet
Let our aw'd art fall proſtrate. They of Ind,
The Tartar tyrants, Tamerlane's proud race,
Or they in Perſia thron'd, who ſhake the rod
Of power o'er myriads of enervate ſlaves,
Expect not humbler homage to their pride
Than does this ſylvan Deſpot *. Yet to thoſe
Who do him loyal ſervice, who revere
His dignity, nor aim, with rebel arms,
At lawleſs uſurpation, is he found

Patient

* See Book the Firſt, line 84. See alſo Mr. Pope's Epiſtle to Lord Burlington, line 57,

Conſult the Genius of the place in all, &c.

A fundamental rule, which is here further enlarged upon from line 126.

Patient and placable, receives well pleas'd
Their tributary treaſures, nor diſdains
To blend them with his own internal ſtore.

Stands he in blank and deſolated ſtate,
Where yawning crags disjointed, ſharp, uncouth,
Involve him with pale horror? in the clefts
Thy welcome ſpade ſhall heap that foſt'ring mould
Whence ſapling Oaks may ſpring; whence cluſt'ring crouds
Of early underwood ſhall veil their ſides,
And teach their rugged heads above the ſhade
To tow'r in ſhapes romantic: Nor, around
Their flinty roots, ſhall ivy ſpare to hang
Its gadding tendrils, nor the moſs-grown turf,
With wild thyme ſprinkled, there refuſe to ſpread
Its verdure. Awful ſtill, yet not auſtere,
The Genius ſtands; bold is his port, and wild,
But not forlorn, nor ſavage. On ſome plain
Of tedious length, ſay, are his flat limbs laid?
Thy hand ſhall lift him from the dreary couch,

Pillowing

Pillowing his head with ſwelling hillocks green,
While, all around, a foreſt-curtain ſpreads
Its waving folds, and bleſſes his repoſe.
What, if perchance in ſome prolific ſoil,
Where Vegetation ſtrenuous, uncontroll'd,
Has puſh'd her pow'rs luxuriant, he now pines
For air and freedom? ſoon thy ſturdy axe,
Amid its intertwiſted foliage driv'n,
Shall open all his glades, and ingreſs give
To the bright darts of day; his priſon'd rills,
That darkling crept amid the ruſtling brakes,
Shall glitter as they glide, and his dank caves,
Free to ſalubrious Zephyrs, ceaſe to weep.
Meanwhile his ſhadowy pomp he ſtill retains,
His Dryads ſtill attend him; they alone
Of race plebeian baniſh'd, who to croud
Not grace his ſtate, their boughs obtruſive flung.

But chief conſult him ere thou dar'ſt decide
Th' appropriate bounds of Pleaſure, and of Uſe;

For Pleaſure, lawleſs robber, oft invades
Her neighbour's right, and turns to idle waſte
Her treaſures; curb her then in ſcanty bounds,
Whene'er the ſcene permits that juſt reſtraint:
The curb reſtrains not Beauty; ſov'reign ſhe
Still triumphs, ſtill unites each ſubject realm,
And bleſſes both impartial. Why then fear
Leſt, if thy fence contract the ſhaven lawn,
It does her wrong? She points a thouſand ways,
And each her own, to cure the needful ill.
Where'er it winds, and freely muſt it wind,
She bids, at ev'ry bend, thick-bloſſom'd tufts
Croud their inwoven'd tendrils; is there ſtill
A void? Lo Lebanon her cedar lends!
Lo all the ſtately progeny of Pines
Come, with their floating foliage richly robed,
To fill that void! meanwhile acroſs the mead
The wand'ring flocks that browſe between the ſhades
Seem oft to paſs their bounds; the dubious eye
Decides not if they crop the mead or lawn.

Browſe then your fill, fond Foreſters! to you
Shall ſturdy Labour quit his daily taſk
Well pleas'd; nor longer o'er his uſeleſs plots
Dip in the dew the ſplendor of his ſcythe.
He, leaning on that ſcythe, with carols gay
Salutes his fleecy ſubſtitutes, that ruſh
In bleating chace to their delicious taſk,
And, ſpreading o'er the plain, with eager teeth
Devour it into verdure. Browſe your fill
Fond Foreſters! the ſoil that you enrich
Shall ſtill ſupply your morn and evening meal
With choiceſt delicates; whether you chooſe
The vernal blades, that riſe with ſeeded ſtem
Of hue purpureal; or the clover white,
That in a ſpiked ball collects its ſweets;
Or trembling feſcue: ev'ry fav'rite herb
Shall court your taſte, ye harmleſs epicures!
Meanwhile permit that with unheeded ſtep
I paſs beſide you, nor let idle fear
Spoil your repaſt, for know the lively ſcene,

That you ſtill more enliven, to my ſoul
Darts inſpiration, and impells the ſong
To roll in bolder deſcant; while, within,
A gleam of happineſs primæval ſeems
To ſnatch me back to joys my nature claim'd,
Ere vice defil'd, ere ſlavery ſunk the world,
And all was faith and freedom: Then was man
Creation's king, yet friend; and all that browſe
The plain, or ſkim the air, or dive the flood,
Paid him their liberal homage; paid unaw'd
In love accepted, ſympathetic love
That felt for all, and bleſt them with its ſmiles.
Then, nor the curling horn had learn'd to ſound
The ſavage ſong of chace; the barbed ſhaft
Had then no poiſon'd point; nor thou, fell tube!
Whoſe iron entrails hide the ſulphurous blaſt,
Satanic engine, knew'ſt the ruthleſs power
Of thundering death around thee. Then alike
Were ye innocuous thro' your ev'ry tribe,
Or brute, or reptile; nor by rage or guile

Had giv'n to injur'd man his only plea
(And that the tyrant's plea *) to work your harm.
Inſtinct, alas, like wayward Reaſon, now
Veers from its pole. There was a golden time
When each created being kept its ſphere
Appointed, nor infring'd its neighbour's right.
The flocks, to whom the graſſy lawn was giv'n,
Fed on its blades contented; now they cruſh
Each ſcion's tender ſhoots, and, at its birth,
Deſtroy, what, ſav'd from their remorſeleſs tooth,
Had been the tree of Jove. Ev'n while I ſing,
Yon wanton lamb has cropt the woodbine's pride,
That bent beneath a full-blown load of ſweets,
And fill'd the air with perfume; ſee it falls;
The buſy bees, with many a murmur ſad,
Hang o'er their honied loſs. Why is it thus?
Ah, why muſt Art defend the friendly ſhades
She rear'd to ſhield you from the noontide beam?

Traitors,

* Alluding to Milton.

So ſpake the Fiend, and with *neceſſity*,
The tyrant's plea, excus'd his deviliſh deeds.
Paradiſe Loſt, book iv. line 393.

Traitors, forbear to wound them! ſay, ye fools!
Does your rich herbage fail? do acrid leaves
Afford you daintier food? I plead in vain;
For now the father of the fleeçy troop
Begins his devaſtation, and his ewes
Croud to the ſpoil, with imitative zeal.

Since then, conſtrain'd, we muſt expel the flock
From where our ſaplings riſe, our flow'rets bloom,
The ſong ſhall teach, in clear preceptive notes,
How beſt to frame the Fence, and beſt to hide
All its foreſeen defects; defective ſtill,
Tho' hid with happieſt art. Ingrateful ſure
When ſuch the theme, beſeems the Poet's taſk:
Yet muſt he try, by modulation meet
Of varied cadence, and ſelected phraſe,
Exact yet free, without inflation bold,
To dignify the ſubject; try to form
That magic ſympathy of ſenſe with ſound
Which pictures all it ſings; while Grace awakes

At each bleſt touch, and, on the lowlieſt things,
Scatters her rainbow hues.—The firſt and beſt
Is that, which, ſinking from our eye, divides,
Yet ſeems not to divide the ſhaven lawn,
And parts it from the paſture; for if there
Sheep feed, or dappled deer, their wandering teeth
Will, ſmoothly as the ſcythe, the herbage ſhave,
And leave a kindred verdure. This to keep
Heed that thy labourer ſcoop the trench with care;
For ſome there are who give their ſpade repoſe,
When broad enough the perpendicular ſides
Divide, and deep deſcend: To form perchance
Some vulgar drain, ſuch labour may ſuffice,
Yet not for beauty: here thy range of wall
Muſt lift its height erect, and, o'er its head
A verdant veil of ſwelling turf expand,
While ſmoothly from its baſe with gradual eaſe
The paſture meets its level, at that point
Which beſt deludes our eye, and beſt conceals
Thy lawn's brief limit. Down ſo ſmooth a ſlope

The fleecy foragers will gladly browſe;
The velvet herbage free from weeds obſcene
Shall ſpread its equal carpet, and the trench
Be paſture to its baſe. Thus form thy fence
Of ſtone, for ſtone alone, and pil'd on high,
Beſt curbs the nimble deer, that love to range
Unlimited; but where tame heifers feed,
Or innocent ſheep, an humbler mound will ſerve
Unlin'd with ſtone, and but a green-ſwerd trench.
Here midway down, upon the nearer bank
Plant thy thick row of thorns, and, to defend
Their infant ſhoots, beneath, on oaken ſtakes,
Extend a rail of elm, ſecurely arm'd
With ſpiculated pailing, in ſuch ſort
As, round ſome citadel, the engineer
Directs his ſharp ſtoccade. But when the ſhoots
Condenſe, and interweave their prickly boughs
Impenetrable, then withdraw their guard,
They've done their office; ſcorn thou to retain,
What frowns like military art, in ſcenes,

Where Peace ſhould ſmile perpetual. Theſe deſtroy'd,
Make it thy vernal care, when April calls
New ſhoots to birth, to trim the hedge aſlaunt,
And mould it to the roundneſs of the mound,
Itſelf a ſhelving hill; nor need we here
The rule or line preciſe, a caſual glance
Suffices to direct the careleſs ſheers.

Yet learn, that each variety of ground
Claims its peculiar barrier. When the foſs
Can ſteal tranſverſe before the central eye,
'Tis duly drawn; but, up yon neighb'ring hill
That fronts the lawn direct, if labour delve
The yawning chaſm, 'twill meet, not croſs our view;
No foliage can conceal, no curve correct
The deep deformity. And yet thou mean'ſt
Up yonder hill to wind thy fragrant way,
And wiſely doſt thou mean; for its broad eye
Catches the ſudden charms of laughing vales,
Rude rocks and headlong ſtreams, and antique oaks

Loſt in a wild horizon; yet the path
That leads to all theſe charms expects defence:
Here then ſuſpend the ſportſman's hempen toils,
And ſtretch their meſhes on the light ſupport
Of hazel plants, or draw thy lines of wire
In fivefold parallel; no danger then
That ſheep invade thy foliage. To thy herds,
And paſtur'd ſteeds an opener fence oppoſe,
Form'd by a triple row of cordage ſtrong,
Tight drawn the ſtakes between. The ſimple deer
Is curb'd by mimic ſnares; the ſlendereſt twine *
(If

* Linnæus makes this a characteriſtical property of the fallow deer; his words are, *arcetur filo horizontali.* (See Syſt. Nat. Art. *Dama.*) I have ſometimes ſeen feathers tied to this line for greater ſecurity, though perhaps unneceſſarily. They ſeem however to have been in uſe in Virgil's time from the following paſſage in the Georgicks:

Stant circumfuſa pruinis
Corpora magna boum: confertoque agmine cervi
Torpent mole novâ, et ſummis vix cornibus extant.
Hos non emiſſis canibus, non caſſibus ullis,
Puniceæve agitant pavidos formidine pennæ:
Sed fruſtra oppoſitum trudentes pectore montem
Cominus obtruncant ferro. GEORG. lib. 3. v. 368.

Ruæus's comment on the fifth line is as follows: *linea, aut funiculus erat, cui Plumæ implicabantur variis tinctæ coloribus, ad feras terrendas, ut in retia agerentur.* And a ſimile, which Virgil uſes in the twelfth book of the Æneid, v. 749, and another in Lucan, Pharſ. lib. 4. v. 437, clearly prove that the learned Jeſuit has rightly explained the paſſage.

(If ſages err not) that the Beldame ſpins,
When by her wintry lamp ſhe plies her wheel,
Arreſts his courage; his impetuous hoof,
Broad cheſt, and branching antlers nought avail;
In fearful gaze he ſtands; the nerves that bore
His bounding pride o'er lofty mounds of ſtone,
A ſingle thread defies. Such force has Fear,
When viſionary Fancy wakes the fiend,
In brute, or man, moſt powerful when moſt vain.

Still muſt the ſwain, who ſpreads theſe corded guards,
Expect their ſwift decay. The noontide beams
Relax, the nightly dews contract the twiſt.
Oft too the coward hare, then only bold
When miſchief prompts, or wintry famine pines,
Will quit her ruſh-grown form, and ſteal, with ear
Up-prick'd, to gnaw the toils; and oft the ram
And jutting ſteer drive their entangling horns
Thro' the frail meſhes, and, by many a chaſm,
Proclaim their hate of thraldom. Nothing brooks

Confinement, ſave degenerate Man alone,
Who deems a monarch's ſmile can gild his chains.
Tir'd then, perchance, of nets that daily claim
Thy renovating labour, thou wilt form,
With elm and oak, a ruſtic baluſtrade
Of firmeſt juncture; happy could thy toil
Make it as fair as firm; but vain the wiſh,
Aim not to grace, but hide its formal line.

Let thoſe, who weekly, from the city's ſmoke,
Croud to each neighb'ring hamlet, there to hold
Their duſty ſabbath, tip with gold and red
The milk-white paliſades, that Gothic now,
And now Chineſe, now neither, and yet both,
Checquer their trim domain. Thy ſylvan ſcene
Would fade, indignant at the tawdry glare.

Come then, thou handmaid of that ſiſter Muſe!
Who, when ſhe calls to life and local form
Her mind's creation, on thy aid depends

For half her mimic power; ſweet Colouring! come,
Lend thy deluſive help, and pleas'd deſcend
Ev'n to thy meaneſt office; grind, compound,
Decide, what kindred hues may ſureſt veil
The barrier rude, and loſe it in the lawn.

She comes, and firſt, with ſnowy ceruſe, joins
The ochr'ous atoms that chalybeate rills
Waſh from their mineral channels, as they glide,
In flakes of earthly gold; with theſe unites
A tinge of blue, or that deep azure gray,
Form'd from the calcin'd fibres of the vine;
And, if ſhe blends, with ſparing hand ſhe blends
That baſe metallic drug then only priz'd,
When, aided by the humid touch of Time,
It gives a Nero's or ſome tyrant's cheek,
Its precious canker. Theſe with fluent oil
Attemper'd, on thy length'ning rail ſhall ſpread
That ſober olive-green which nature wears
Ev'n on her vernal boſom; nor miſdeem,

For

For that, illumin'd with the noontide ray,
She boaſts a brighter garment, therefore Art
A livelier verdure to thy aid ſhould bring.
Know when that Art, with ev'ry varied hue,
Portrays the living landſcape; when her hand
Commands the canvaſs plane to glide with ſtreams,
To wave the foliage, or with flowers to breathe,
Cool olive tints, in ſoft gradation laid,
Create the general herbage: there alone,
Where darts, with vivid force, the ray ſupreme,
Unſullied verdure reigns; and tells our eye
It ſtole its bright reflection from the ſun.

The paint is ſpread; the barrier pales retire,
Snatch'd, as by magic, from the gazer's view.
So, when the ſable enſign of the night,
Unfurl'd by miſt-impelling Eurus, veils
The laſt red radiance of declining day,
Each ſcatter'd village, and each holy ſpire
That deck'd the diſtance of the ſylvan ſcene,

Are

Are ſunk in ſudden gloom: The plodding hind,
That homeward hies, kens not the chearing ſite
Of his calm cabbin, which, a moment paſt,
Stream'd from its roof an azure curl of ſmoke,
Beneath the ſheltering coppice, and gave ſign
Of warm domeſtic welcome from his toil.

Nor is that Cot, of which fond Fancy draws
This caſual picture, alien from our theme.
Reviſit it at morn; its opening latch,
Tho' Penury and Toil within reſide,
Shall pour thee forth a youthful progeny
Glowing with health and beauty: (ſuch the dower
Of equal heav'n) ſee, how the ruddy tribe
Throng round the threſhold, and, with vacant gaze,
Salute thee; call the loiterers into uſe,
And form of theſe thy fence, the living fence
That graces what it guards. Thou think'ſt, perchance,
That, ſkill'd in nature's heraldry, thy art
Has, in the limits of yon fragrant tuft,

Marſhall'd

Marſhall'd each roſe, that to the eye of June
Spreads its peculiar crimſon; do not err,
The lovelieſt ſtill is wanting; the freſh roſe
Of Innocence, it bloſſoms on their cheek,
And, lo, to thee they bear it! ſtriving each,
In panting race, who firſt ſhall reach the lawn,
Proud to be call'd thy ſhepherds. Want, alas!
Has o'er their little limbs her livery hung,
In many a tatter'd fold, yet ſtill thoſe limbs
Are ſhapely; their rude locks ſtart from their brow,
Yet, on that open brow, its deareſt throne,
Sits ſweet Simplicity. Ah, clothe the troop
In ſuch a ruſſet garb as beſt befits
Their paſtoral office; let the leathern ſcrip
Swing at their ſide, tip thou their crook with ſteel,
And braid their hat with ruſhes, then to each
Aſſign his ſtation; at the cloſe of eve,
Be it their care to pen in hurdled cote
The flock, and when the matin prime returns,
Their care to ſet them free; yet watching ſtill

The liberty they lend, oft ſhalt thou hear
Their whiſtle ſhrill, and oft their faithful dog
Shall with obedient barkings fright the flock
From wrong or robbery. The livelong day
Meantime rolls lightly o'er their happy heads;
They baſk on ſunny hillocks, or deſport
In ruſtic paſtime, while that lovelieſt grace,
Which only lives in action unreſtrain'd,
To ev'ry ſimple geſture lends a charm.

Pride of the year, purpureal Spring! attend,
And, in the cheeks of theſe ſweet innocents
Behold your beauties pictur'd. As the cloud
That weeps its moment from thy ſapphire heav'n,
They frown with cauſeleſs ſorrow; as the beam,
Gilding that cloud, with cauſeleſs mirth they ſmile.
Stay, pitying Time! prolong their vernal bliſs.
Alas! ere we can note it in our ſong,
Comes manhood's feveriſh ſummer, chill'd full ſoon

By cold autumnal care, till wintry age
Sinks in the frore ſeverity of death.

Ah! who, when ſuch life's momentary dream,
Would mix in hireling ſenates, ſtrenuous there
To cruſh the venal Hydra, whoſe fell creſts
Riſe with recruited venom from the wound!
Who, for ſo vain a conflict, would forego
Thy ſylvan haunts, celeſtial Solitude!
Where ſelf-improvement, crown'd with ſelf-content,
Await to bleſs thy votary. Nurtur'd thus
In tranquil groves, liſt'ning to nature's voice,
That preach'd from whiſpering trees, and babbling brooks,
A leſſon ſeldom learnt in reaſon's ſchool,
The wiſe Sidonian liv'd *: and, tho' the peſt
Of lawleſs tyranny around him rag'd;
Tho' Strato, great alone in Perſia's gold,
Uncall'd,

* Abdalominus. The fact, on which this epiſode is founded, is recorded by Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Juſtin, and Q. Curtius; the laſt is here chiefly followed. M. de Fontenelle and the Abbé Metaſtaſio have both of them treated the ſubject dramatically.

Uncall'd, unhallow'd by the people's choice,
Uſurp'd the throne of his brave anceſtors;
Yet was his ſoul all peace; a garden's care
His only thought, its charms his only pride.

But now the conquering arms of Macedon
Had humbled Perſia. Now Phænicia's realm
Receives the Son of Ammon; at whoſe frown
Her tributary kings or quit their thrones,
Or at his ſmile retain; and Sidon, now
Freed from her tyrant, points the Victor's ſtep
To where her rightful Sov'reign, doubly dear
By birth and virtue, prun'd his garden grove.

'Twas at that early hour, when now the Sun
Behind majeſtic Lebanon's dark veil
Hid his aſcending ſplendour; yet thro' each
Her cedar-veſted ſides, his ſlaunting beams
Shot to the ſtrand, and purpled all the main;
Where Commerce ſaw her Sidon's freighted wealth,

With languid ſtreamers, and with folded ſails,
Float in a lake of gold. The wind was huſh'd;
And, to the beech, each ſlowly-lifted wave,
Creeping with ſilver curl, juſt kiſt the ſhore,
And ſlept in ſilence. At this tranquil hour
Did Sidon's ſenate, and the Grecian hoſt,
Led by the conqueror of the world, approach
The ſecret glade that veil'd the man of toil.

Now near the mountain's foot the chief arriv'd,
Where, round that glade, a pointed aloe ſcreen,
Entwin'd with myrtle, met in tangled brakes,
That bar'd all entrance, ſave at one low gate,
Whoſe time-disjointed arch with ivy chain'd,
Bad ſtoop the warrior train. A pathway brown
Led thro' the paſs, meeting a fretful brook,
And wandering near its channel, while it leapt
O'er many a rocky fragment, where rude Art
Perchance had help'd, but not preſcrib'd its way.

Cloſe was the vale and ſhady; yet, erelong
Its foreſt ſides retiring, left a lawn
Of ample circuit, where the widening ſtream
Now, o'er its pebbled channel, nimbly tript
In many a lucid maze. From the flower'd verge
Of this clear rill now ſtray'd the devious path,
Amid ambroſial tufts where ſpicy plants,
Weeping their perfum'd tears of myrrh, and nard,
Stood crown'd with Sharon's roſe; or where, apart,
The patriarch Palm his load of ſugar'd dates
Shower'd plenteous; where the Fig, of ſtandard ſtrength,
And rich Pomegranate wrapt, in dulcet pulp,
Their racy ſeeds; or where, with golden fruit
Mature, the Citron wav'd its ſplendid bough.
Meanwhile the lawn beneath the ſcatter'd ſhade
Spread its ſerene extent; a ſtately file
Of circling Cypreſs mark'd the diſtant bound.

Now, to the left, the path aſcending pierc'd
A ſmaller ſylvan theatre, yet deck'd

With

With more majeſtic foliage. Cedars here,
Coeval with the ſky-crown'd mountain's ſelf,
Spread wide their giant arms; whence, from a rock
Craggy and black, that ſeem'd its fountain head,
The ſtream fell headlong; yet ſtill higher roſe,
Ev'n in th' eternal ſnow of Lebanon,
That hallow'd ſpring; thence, in the porous earth
Long while ingulph'd, its cryſtal weight here forc'd
Its way to light and freedom. Down it daſh'd;
A bed of native marble pure, receiv'd
The new-born Naiad, and repos'd her wave,
Till with o'er-flowing pride it ſkim'd the lawn.

Fronting this lake there roſe a ſolemn grot,
O'er which an ancient vine luxuriant flung
Its purple cluſters, and beneath its roof
An unhewn altar. Rich Sabæan gums
That altar pil'd, and there with torch of pine
The venerable Sage, now firſt deſcry'd,
The fragrant incenſe kindled. Age had ſhed

That duſt of ſilver o'er his ſable locks,
Which ſpoke his ſtrength mature beyond its prime,
Yet vigorous ſtill, for from his healthy cheek
Time had not cropt a roſe, or on his brow
One wrinkling furrow plow'd; his eagle eye
Had all its youthful lightning, and each limb
The ſinewy ſtrength that toil demands and gives.

The warrior ſaw and paus'd: his nod withheld
The crowd at awful diſtance, where their ears,
In mute attention, drank the ſage's prayer.
" Parent of good (he cried) behold the gifts
" Thy humble votary brings, and may thy ſmile
" Hallow his cuſtom'd offering. Let the hand
" That deals in blood, with blood thy ſhrines diſtain,
" Be mine this harmleſs tribute. If it ſpeaks
" A grateful heart, can hecatombs do more?
" Parent of Good! they cannot. Purple Pomp
" May call thy preſence to a prouder fane
" Than this poor cave; but will thy preſence there

" Be

" Be more devoutly felt? Parent of Good!
" It will not. Here then, ſhall the proſtrate heart,
" That deeply feels thy preſence, lift its pray'r.—
" But what has he to aſk who nothing needs,
" Save, what unaſk'd, is, from thy heav'n of heav'ns
" Giv'n in diurnal good? Yet, holy Power!
" Do all that call thee Father thus exult
" In thy propitious preſence? Sidon ſinks
" Beneath a tyrant's ſcourge. Parent of Good!
" Oh free my captive country."—Sudden here
He paus'd and ſigh'd. And now, the raptur'd crowd
Murmur'd applauſe: he heard, he turn'd, and ſaw
The King of Macedon with eager ſtep
Burſt from his warrior phalanx. From the youth,
Who bore its ſtate, the conqueror's own right hand
Snatch'd the rich wreath, and bound it on his brow.
His ſwift attendants o'er his ſhoulders caſt
The robe of empire, while the trumpet's voice
Proclaim'd him king of Sidon. Stern he ſtood,
Or, if he ſmil'd, 'twas a contemptuous ſmile,

That

That held the pageant honours in diſdain.
Then burſt the people's voice, in loud acclaim,
And bad him be their Father. At the word,
The honour'd blood, that warm'd him, fluſh'd his cheek;
His brow expanded; his exalted ſtep
March'd firmer; graciouſly he bow'd the head,
And was the Sire they call'd him. "Tell me, King,"
Young Ammon cried, while o'er his bright'ning form
He caſt the gaze of wonder, "how a ſoul
"Like thine could bear the toils of Penury?"
"Oh grant me, Gods!" he anſwer'd, "ſo to bear
"This load of Royalty. My toil was crown'd
"With bleſſings loſt to Kings; yet, righteous Powers!
"If to my country ye transfer the boon,
"I triumph in the loſs. Be mine the chains
"That fetter Sov'reignty; let Sidon ſmile
"With, your beſt bleſſings, Liberty and Peace."

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

BOOKS

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